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The big conservation job is on Private land

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

PICTURE STORY 142
MAY 1962

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THE BIG CONSERVATION JOB IS ON PRIVATE LAND

Most of the Nation's land and water conservation job is on privately owned or privately operated land.

Three-fourths of the Nation's land area is in private ownership. Sixty percent is in farms and ranches. In addition, since agriculture in the broader sense includes forestry and grazing management, there are the National Forests and Grasslands, administered by the Department of Agriculture, and that part of the public domain used for grazing.

Altogether, the farmers and ranchers of the United States control the use of soil, water, trees and other plants, and wildlife on 85 percent of our land area. Thus, largely under the care of American agriculture are the basic conservation jobs of soil erosion control; water management, which begins with management of the farmland and forests on which most of the water falls; forestry; wildlife (80 to 85 percent of the hunting and fishing and of the manageable wildlife habitat is on farms and ranches); and most of the landscape that provides much of the Nation's recreation and can provide a great deal more.

The Department of Agriculture works directly with landowners and operators in cooperative programs with the 50 States to bring about the conservation, development, and management of soil, water, grass, forest, and wildlife resources on private lands and on the forests and grasslands under its administration as well.

These conservation programs include:

Research in soils, water, and forestry, much of it in cooperation with State Agricultural Experiment Stations.

Educational assistance through the State Extension Services of the Land Grant Colleges.

Technical assistance through the more than 2,900 locally-managed soil conservation districts operating under State law, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, and Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasts.

Credit assistance through loans to individuals and groups of farmers and ranchers and to local sponsoring organizations of Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention projects.

Financial assistance through cost sharing with individuals and groups in establishing certain conservation practices under the Agricultural Conservation Program; through cost sharing under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, and the Great Plains Conservation Program; and through the State Forestry departments.

Department of Agriculture agencies that devote all of their resources to nationwide conservation activities are the Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service. Agencies that devote part of their resources to conservation are the Agricultural Research Service, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, the Economic Research Service, the Federal Extension Service through the Land Grant Colleges and Universities and the Farmers Home Administration.

Research, Education



SOIL MAPPING — Soil scientists are tirelessly probing, examining and mapping the soils from one end of the United States to the other. The soil surveys provide the base for most conservation programs. They are used not only by farmers, ranchers and foresters, but also by engineers, urban planners, land appraisers and others. Soil scientists map about 50 million acres of land each year. To date, about 821 million acres — or more than a third of the Nation's land — have been surveyed. ILL-2055

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS — A Delaware farmer gets help with his conservation farm plan from a conservation technician. The farmer is a cooperator in one of 2,900 soil conservation districts that include about 92 percent of the land in farms and 96 percent of the farms in the Nation. These locally governed divisions of the State have a working agreement with USDA for technical and other assistance. DEL-10327



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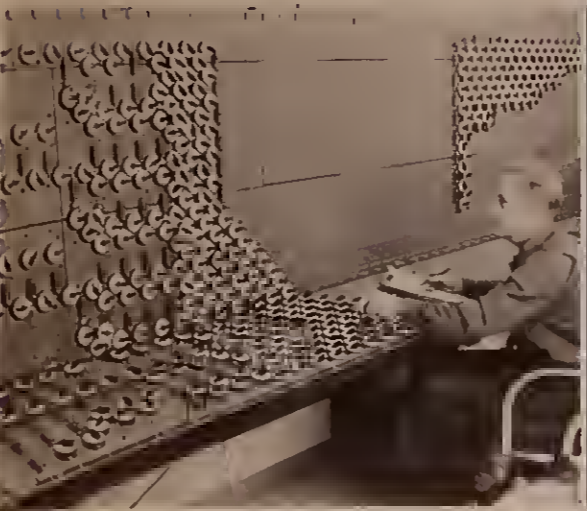
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Research, Education, Technical and Financial Aid Keystones of USDA Conservation Programs

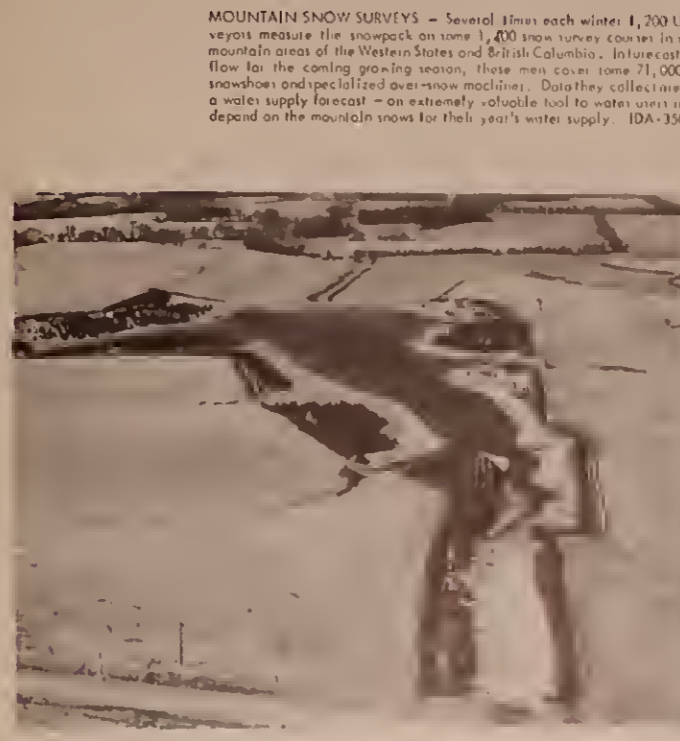


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LAB RESEARCH - New research tools aid in faster development of knowledge needed for more efficient use of water, particularly in the arid West. This analog computer is used in the study of drainage and ground water recharge problems at the USDA Water Conservation Laboratory, Tempe, Ariz. Pressure, resistance and other responses of water in the soil may be duplicated in the form of electrical responses. The problems can then be analyzed mathematically. N-44161

FIELD RESEARCH - Hydrologists use gamma-ray density probe to measure sediment accumulation in reservoirs. This is part of soil and water conservation research at the new USDA Sedimentation Research Laboratory, Oxford, Miss. Critical erosion and sedimentation conditions in the area enable scientists to study the problems under combined laboratory and watershed conditions. The Department also has responsibility for research on forests and related range problems. BN-13751-X



MOUNTAIN SNOW SURVEYS - Several times each winter 1,200 USDA snow surveys measure the snowpack on some 1,400 snow survey courses in remote, rugged mountain areas of the Western States and British Columbia. In forecasting the stream-flow for the coming growing season, these men cover some 71,000 miles on skis, snowshoes and specialized over-snow machines. Data they collect are translated into a water supply forecast - an extremely valuable tool to water users in the West who depend on the mountain snows for their year's water supply. IDA-35067



FARM WILDLIFE - USDA assistance to farmers in encouraging wildlife now includes cost-sharing in establishing wildlife food and cover and building the pond shell in addition to technical assistance. This man-made pond in Illinois is suitable for swimming, boating and fishing. Food and cover for wildlife make it an ideal stopping place for game birds in migration. ILL-2029

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS - A Delaware farmer gets help with his conservation farm plan from a conservation technician. The farmer is a cooperater. In one of 2,900 soil conservation districts that include about 92 percent of the land in farms and 96 percent of the farms in the Nation. These locally governed divisions of the State have a working agreement with USDA for technical and other assistance. DEL-10327



GREAT PLAINS - Unprotected farmland in the Great Plains is laid bare to the ravages of wind erosion while adjoining land with conservation field strips remains stable. The Great Plains Conservation Program - tailor made for this area of severe climatic hazards - met immediate acceptance by farmers and ranchers after its enactment in 1956 as Public Law 1071. To date more than 8,000 contracts covering more than 21 million acres of land have been made under this long term soil and water conservation program, which provides for technical help based on research, and educational, planning and credit assistance. MONT-183



WATER RECREATION - Many of the lakes created through the Small Watershed Program are ideally suited for the development of water-based recreational facilities. The 16-acre lake pictured in Georgia's Satree Creek Watershed is a part of a Girl Scout camp where the girls canoe and swim. Other watershed lakes have been developed for boating, water skiing, fishing and hunting. GA-03-155

MULTIPURPOSE WATERSHED PROJECTS - The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L. 556) fills the gap in the conservation job between small individual farms and that undertaken in the larger river basins. Pictured is a portion of Minnesota's East Willow Creek Watershed, showing a flood prevention dam and upland conservation measures such as strip cropping and contour planting. Although primarily for flood prevention, small watershed projects are developed by local organizations for many other purposes including municipal and industrial water supply, recreation, fish and wildlife, and afforestation. USDA provides educational, technical, research, cost-sharing, and credit assistance. MINN-1731

A logger and a fisherman greet each other along the Santee/Elkhorn Creek in the Carolina's Nantahala National Forest. The logger is transporting part of the timber harvested annually from the surrounding watershed, while the fisherman is availing his luck at lilling his creel. National Forests provide water for homes and industries, timber for building and paper; habitat for thousands of species of fish and game; grazing land for cattle and sheep; and outdoor recreation for all Americans. The National Forests were hosts to more than 102 million recreational visits in 1961 - an increase of 34 percent in the last 10 years.

For all our technological progress, we are not yet out of the woods. We wear rayon clothing, put artificial vanilla flavoring in our food, and use many paper and plastic goods in our daily lives. All of these products come from trees. Research guarantees that we will continue to use wood - transformed into many other items. Forest Service Photo-494692



WATERSHED PLANS - Soil conservation projects and the use of strip cropping to prevent soil erosion are shown in this photograph of the 1950s in the Great Plains. ILL-1265

Recreation Joins Conservation as Farm, Ranch Enterprise



Forestry cooperative programs of the U. S. Department of Agriculture include assistance to private woodland owners. This is accomplished through financial and technical aid to States. Here a trained forester discusses woodland management with a Louisiana farmer who has built up his family forest to a point where it is now a source of regular income. Forest Service Photo-471063



One of USDA's most successful cooperative efforts with the States and with private landowners is the nationwide tree planting program. Last year individual States and private landowners planted nine trees for every American man, woman and child. That's a total of 1.7 billion trees. We still need to plant more trees, particularly on the small farm and other private ownerships, but this is progress on an important and gigantic job. WN-90234

Whether water skiing, swimming, or just soaking up the Texas sun, these recreationists at Lake McClellan find a tube of sun tan lotion a handy thing to have around. The lake is a unit of the Panhandle National Grasslands which cover 300,000 acres in Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma. Recreation is a major attraction of the 18 National Grasslands administered by USDA. Formerly submarginal agricultural lands in the Great Plains, these 5 million acres — stretching from North Dakota to Texas, from Oklahoma to Idaho — were taken over by the government during the depression-ridden 1930's and rehabilitated for the benefit of all Americans. Forest Service Photo-495043



Recreation is a new crop on privately-owned farms, ranches, and woodlands, and opportunities for its expansion are limitless. On many farms, land formerly in row crops is being used at profit to the owners for fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, swimming, boating, nature study. Recreational income is possible on virtually every farm or ranch. Elaborate facilities are not needed. Picnic tables, a stocked pond or lake — these may be enough, plus imagination. CAL-7196

A lake and its forest backdrop make this pleasant setting an ideal campsite for recreationists. Although this isolated camping spot is on the Shasta National Forest in California, thousands of similar spots can be found on non-federally-owned land. And more and more people are seeking out these isolated areas as demand increases for the popular but sometimes overcrowded campgrounds on the National Forests.

The 154 National Forests and 18 National Grasslands administered by USDA have 5,279 camp and picnic areas containing over 55,426 family camp and picnic units. Forest Service Photo-486574



The Department of Agriculture was in the forest recreation business long before rumble seats and self-starting engines appeared on the horseless carriages of yesteryear. This 1919 photo was taken on the Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado. The use of forests for many purposes, including recreation, has long been supported by the Department. Americans today can camp, fish, and hunt on 186 million acres of National Forests and National Grasslands. Tables and benches, toilets, garbage receptacles, and wherever possible approved drinking water, have been provided to make visits more enjoyable. Forest Service Photo-43626 A